Remarks

Claims 2 to 15 and 17 to 27 remain pending.

The Examiner rejected claims 2 to 15 and 17 to 27 under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, on the basis that the claimed subject matter is not described in the specification.

Applicants respectfully disagree, and submit that the subject matter of the claims is fully supported and explained in the specification as originally filed, at least in the paragraphs identified below.

The Examiner provides an exemplary discussion of claim 7 in the Office Action.

For the Examiner's convenience, independent claim 7 is provided below:

A method of processing an output signal comprising:

checking a state of a control bit that specifies whether to assemble the output signal from multiple virtual tributary (VT) or tributary unit (TU) connections or handle the output signal as an synchronous transport signal (STS) or administrative unit (AU) connection;

switching a predetermined number of entries together based on the state of the control bit; and

storing the control bit in a connection memory.

The Examiner states that "it is unclear whether the claimed invention receives both SDH and SONET frames", and that "the Examiner could not find support for such feature in the specification" (see the Office Action at page 2). However, Applicants respectfully submit that the original specification clearly states that the network can be a SONET and/or SDH network. Specifically, page 3 lines 24 to 29 recite (emphasis added):

In one example, the network can be a SONET and/or SDH network. Network elements 12 in network 10 switch data traffic. While the figures and descriptions use primarily terms associated with the SONET protocol and systems, it will be understood that other protocols and systems such as SDH can be used.

Accordingly, since the network can be a SONET network and/or an SDH network, the apparatus as claimed in claim 7 is capable of receiving both SONET and/or SDH frames.

Furthermore, page 4 lines 14 and 15 recite (emphasis added):

> .... the cross-connect switches all columns of the _SONET/SDH_ frame together as a large bulk signal.

Moreover, Applicants respectfully point to the Abstract which discloses:

> _A method and apparatus for efficient provisioning of a VT/TU cross-connect includes checking a state of a control bit that specifies whether to assemble an output from multiple virtual tributary (VT1.5/VT2) or tributary unit (TU11/TU12) connections or handle the output as an synchronous transport signal (STS) or administrative unit (AU-3/AU-4) connection, and switching a predetermined number of entries together based on a state of the control bit._

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the subject matter claimed in independent claims 7, 18, and 24 is fully described in the specification in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, to make and use the same as required under 35 USC 112, first paragraph. Claims 2 to 6, 8 to 15, 17, 19 to 23, and 25 to 27 recite additional features which are also fully described in the original specification.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, is respectfully requested.

No fee is believed due for this submission. However, Applicant authorizes the Commissioner to debit any required fee from Deposit Account No. 501593, in the name of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. The Commissioner is further authorized to debit any additional amount required, and to credit any overpayment to the above-noted deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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